No Reward's Worth This

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Category: Star Wars
Genre: Drama
Language: English
Status: Completed
Published: 2000-07-01 09:00:00
Updated: 2000-07-01 09:00:00
Packaged: 2016-04-27 21:50:33
Rating: K
Chapters: 3
Words: 3,740
Publisher: www.fanfiction.net
Summary: Anakin's offered the opportunity of a lifetime but it's either that or Padme. He can't have both :

1. Default Chapter Title

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Author's Note: Anakin is 19 years old which makes PadmÃ© 24. This story will be told through Anakin's point of view. He is already knighted a Jedi, and gave up that life to pursue his love of flying. I made up Wing Academy, and it's sort of like the big leagues for pilots.

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No Reward's Worth This

Part 1

**

The opportunity of a lifetime just knocked at my door. I was just asked by the chairman of Wing Academy himself if I would like to be a pilot for Wing Academy. Not just a pilot, but the head pilot of the defense department. I was in shock! I mean this academy is for elite pilots only. Only the best are even considered. Each year the academy recruits only a hundred of the best pilots from all over 9 galaxies, and this year I'm one of them.

I would be out of my mind not to accept this offer. As a matter of

fact, the only thing keeping me from contacting the academy at this very moment isâ€¦PadmÃ©. Joining the academy is rewarding, but it comes with its sacrifices. I would have to end up residing far from PadmÃ©. I won't be able to visit here much because the academy demands so much from its pilots. Our relationship would just eventually die out. It's different from when I first left her to train as a Jedi; back then we weren't so intimately involved.

But do PadmÃ© and I even have a future together? I mean she's the Queen of Naboo for crying out loud! And what am I? A former slave boy turned Jedi who happens to be a good pilot. If I marry PadmÃ©, what do I have to offer her people? Clearly she has enough pilots at her disposal, and what good would one Jedi do for her people? Her people mean more to her than anythingâ€¦ more than me. She told me that herself.

"My people come first Ani. Even before you." Well, at least those were the words she used. That's how I understood it. Would I be doing her a favor by taking up the academy's offer? I wonderâ€¦

Anyway, now I'm moping by myself here in the Palace's garden. Trying to figure out whether to go left or right, figuratively speaking. In times like these I find myself missing my former master Obi Wan. Right now I want to pour out all my angst on him and wait for his advice. I'm so deep in thought I didn't even notice that PadmÃ© just sat next to me.

"Why so glum Ani?" God she's so beautiful, especially when she's not in her royal outfits. Right now she's dressed simply as a handmaiden, without all that make up that I've never been fond of.

"Oh, hey love," I said, giving her a quick but tender kiss on the lips. "I'm not glumâ€¦ just pensive." I know she's not used to me this way. I'm usually such a chatterbox with sunshine radiating off me. Then again, I'm not used to being offered a position at the Wing Academy.

"Pensive?â€¦ So I take it the rumor is true?"

"What rumor might that be?" I asked, nonchalantly.

"That you were offered a head department position at the Wing Academy. I heard the chairman asked you himself." She said. I couldn't tell whether she was disappointed or what. She's so good in taking away any emotion there might be in her voice. "Ani, is it true?"

"Yes" I answered with much hesitation and with my head down. I didn't look up, I just stared at the ground waiting for her reaction.

"Aniâ€¦ pilots who join the academy must devote so much to it. I would not be able to see you very often," PadmÃ© said, choosing her words carefully. "Also, it's such a dangerous job. Pilots for the academy die on a regular basis because their missions are dangerous."

I didn't respond to that. I didn't know how to. I wasn't sure if she was giving me the facts, or if she's just trying to start a conversation, or if she's trying to tell me that it's a bad idea to

join. So I just kept facing the ground.

"Ani, what's your answer to the academy's offer?" PadmÃ© asked. I thought about it for a really long time. I thought about how it's a dream come true for myself. I thought about how it's a once in a lifetime opportunity. I thought about how I would be doing her a favor if I did leaveâ€¦her and her peopleâ€¦ her beloved people. Finally, reluctantly, I answeredâ€¦

"I'm going to accept the offer." I said, almost regretfully. There was silence, I was letting my words sink in just as much as PadmÃ© probably was.

Finally, after what seemed like hours, PadmÃ© broke the silence, "Why?"

"Being a pilot was always something I was good at. It's my talent. God doesn't give you something he doesn't want you to use." I said, looking PadmÃ© straight in the eyes, finally lifting my head.

"But you can be a pilot anywhere Ani! You can be a pilot here, I'll let you lead the squadron." I guess it's safe to say she doesn't want me to leave. "And what about us?"

"What _about _us?" I responded. I regretted saying it the moment the words slipped through my lips. I hurt her. I could tell, her eyes were getting misty. I justified it to myself by saying I'm doing her a favor. It made me feel so rotten I was about to say some sort of apology but she ran out of the garden.

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To be continuedâ€¦

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The next chapter will be continued through PadmÃ©'s point of view. So stay tunedâ€¦

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Author's Note: You have to read **No Reward's Worth This Part 1 **to fully understand what's going on. Soon after PadmÃ© left Anakin in the garden, Anakin had a talk with PadmÃ©'s handmaiden SachÃ©. He told her the real reason he decided to accept the academy's offer. This part of the story is told through PadmÃ©'s point of view. Anywayâ€¦

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No Reward's Worth This

Part 2

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I should be ashamed of myself! Running out of the garden like that, then moping and being all angry here in my quarters. It's no way for a queen to act. Right now though, I couldn't care less. He just makes me so angry sometimes.

I love him, and I was almost certain he felt the same way for meâ€¦ until now. He spoke about leaving like it was nothing! Is being part of that stupid academy more important to him than I am? He knows that with his skills he can be a pilot anywhere. Why must he pick to go to the farthest place he could possibly be from me?

Look at me, crying over someone who probably at this moment is packing his things, not even giving me a second thought! Oh, this is so unlike him. There must be something else to it. Could it be that he's fallen out of love with me, and is taking this opportunity to spare my feelings? If it is, it's not working. I didn't even realize I'm hugging a picture of him.

I can't lose him, he means the world to me.

I love him. But right now though I also really, really hate him! If it was going to end up like this, why did he lead me on for so long? Why did he make me think that we had a future together? Was I right? Did he finally outgrow his childhood love for me?

Besides that fact that I think Ani doesn't love me anymore, I'm disturbed with the fact that if he joins Wing Academy, he might get seriously injured. He might even die. Why is he doing this? Doesn't he know that this is tearing me apart right now?

Oh my, it's SachÃ©. I can't let her see me like this.

"Your highnessâ€¦ what's the matter?" SachÃ© asked as she walked into my quarters. How silly she'll think of her queen after I tell her what's wrong. I'll tell her anyway though, I need a sounding board of sorts at the moment.

"It's Ani. He accepted the Wing Academy's offer. Not only that, he doesn't seem to care that he and I will be apart." I said, not caring if my voice was laced with sorrow. SachÃ©'s my friend, I can act like this and still keep my dignity in her eyes.

"Your highnessâ€¦" she started, but I cut her off.

"For god's sake SachÃ©, it's just me and you, can't you call me by my real name?!" I said irritated.

"Sorry Your Highâ€¦ erâ€¦ PadmÃ©" Despite my mood, I couldn't help but smile at her. It's been such a long while since we've spoken like this that I almost can't blame her.

"Soâ€¦ what were you going to say?" I asked.

"Well, I was going to tell you that I'm sure Anakin didn't accept the academy's offer because he wanted to be away from you or that he

doesn't love you anymore." SachÃ© told me. She said it almost as if she was trying to comfort a 5 yr. old who just lost their balloon to the sky.

"Are you telling me that he accepted the offer because flying is his love? SachÃ© I'M supposed to be his love! He can be a pilot anywhere!" I said angrily. It was a good thing there was nothing breakable near me at the moment.

"Your Highnessâ€¦ I have something to tell you, but you can't tell Anakin I told you. Promise?" SachÃ© seems so unsure whether to tell me or not that I had to respond immediately.

"Of course. SachÃ© tell me." I said, encouraging her.

"Well, I just came from the garden and I had a long talk with Anakin."

"You did?!" I asked surprised.

"Yes. He told me everything. About him accepting the academy's offer and why. And it's certainly not because he doesn't love you. Quite the opposite actually." SachÃ© began reluctantly.

"Are you saying he decided to leave because he loves me? I'm not sure I follow." I said with much skepticism.

"He said that he has nothing to offer you. He told me that your people mean more to you than anything and as the Queen of Naboo, your people must always come first so long as you're queen." SachÃ© paused for a second, she looked up at me, but I urged her to continue. "He said that he believes you would rather marry a powerful man who could provide well for the people of Naboo. He thought he was making things easier for you if he leftâ€¦ He loves you more than anything PadmÃ©, you must believe that."

I couldn't believe it! Doesn't Anakin know that he's my everything? When I told him that my people came first, even before him, I said it so that he would never make me choose between him and my duties as queen. Because I feared that if Anakin did make me chooseâ€¦ I would choose him. Anakin. My love, my world, my everything.

"Oh SachÃ©, why didn't he just tell me?" I asked, confused.

"I'm not sure. I think he thought that by not telling you, he did what was best." SachÃ© said. "PadmÃ©, Anakin didn't say, but I'm pretty sure he didn't want me to tell you. And the only reason I did is because you were so lonely and as your handmaiden, I felt it was my duty to inform you. Please don't tell Anakin, he is my friend, and he would never trust me again."

"Don't worry SachÃ©, he won't know of it. And I'm glad you decided to tell me. You're a good friend." I said smiling to her. Bless her heart, what a burden she lifted from me. She nods and walks out of my quarters.

Anakin Skywalker, you're not getting away that easily.

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To be continuedâ€¦

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PadmÃ© confronts Anakin. Stay tuned for the conclusion!

3. Default Chapter Title

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Author's Note: You have to read **No Reward's Worth This Part 1**and **2 **to fully understand what's going on. Well, this is the conclusion to my story, I hope you enjoy it.

No Reward's Worth This

Part 3

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PadmÃ© had been wandering the palace for well over a half an hour searching for Anakin Skywalker. Or better yet, HER Ani. Her mind was very busy the whole time she searched for him. She didn't know whether to be mad at him or to feel glad that he thought of her needs first. She was still confused, and even a little hurt as to why Anakin confided in her handmaiden SachÃ© instead of her. Also, her mind was still racing to find the right things to say for when she confronts him.

It was the middle of the night, and aside for some of the guards guarding a few entrances, there weren't many people up and about in the palace. PadmÃ© was still dressed as a simple handmaiden, therefore not drawing much attention to herself. The first place she tried to find Anakin was his quarters but he wasn't there.

After another half an hour of searching, she finally found him. He was in the hangar bay sitting in the cockpit of one of the Nubian ships. The same kind of ship he used to blow up the command center for the trade federation 10 years ago. He was so deep in thought he didn't sense her present. That was uncommon for a Jedi for they're always in tuned with the force.

"â€¦ Ani?" PadmÃ© whispered. It came out almost as if she was asking if it was him. She would decide what to say next depending on how he responded.

Anakin quickly turned his head, startled. By the look on his face she could tell he didn't like being caught off-guard like this. He quickly put on a normal face soon after and simply said, "PadmÃ©."

"Don't you think we should talk?" PadmÃ© asked hesitantly.

Anakin didn't really answer her question, instead he got out of the cockpit he sat in and slowly walked up to her. "I'm sorry. I mean for my behavior in the garden earlier. Iâ€¦"

But she cut him off, "Ani, I know why you've decided to accept the academy's offer."

"Well, I told you. It's a once in a lifetime opportunity."

"No, you think it's what's best for usâ€¦ for me." PadmÃ© said, not taking her eyes off his. This made him uncomfortable so he turned around.

"So I take it you've been speaking to a certain handmaiden? Don't I feel foolish. I should've known that her duties to you came first, even if she is my friend." Anakin said, with no trace of anger in his voice, only sadness.

"Don't be mad at SachÃ©, she onlyâ€¦" PadmÃ© started.

"I'm not mad, don't worry about it." Anakin reassured her. "Soâ€¦ I'm sure you weren't wandering around here in the hangar bay for a late night stroll. Why _are _you here?"

"I don't want you to leave." PadmÃ© said, with strong conviction in her voice.

"It's for the best!" Anakin said, exasperated. "You'll find out sooner or later that I'm right. When something bad happens here on Naboo and your people need help you'll realize that I was right."

"We're talking about you and me here, not my people. Can't you forget about them for now and focus on us?!"

"Yeah, I can! The question is can you?" Anakin replied, a hint of anger laced his voice. Yes, he was angry, didn't she realize this was hard enough for him? It's almost become unbearable for him now knowing she wanted him to stay.

"Ani, that's not fair." PadmÃ© whispered, tears streaming down her cheeks. Anakin didn't respond, instead he faced the ground. "My people are important to me. But so are you, if you want what's best for me, then stay. Do you think I'd be happy knowing you're so far away from me flying around the galaxy on insanely dangerous missions? Being nervous every time a call comes in thinking it might be to notify me that you're missing orâ€¦"

"Don't say it. Please. I know the risks, but let's just leave them unsaid." Anakin said, cutting her off not wanting to hear anymore.

"Ani, I love you. You mean the world to me and if you joining the academy is what will make you happy, then I can live with that. And if you can look me straight in the eye and say from the bottom of your heart that you don't love me and want to leaveâ€¦ I'll leave you aloneâ€¦but if you can't, ask yourself why. Look me in the eye Ani and tell me."

Anakin turned to look at her, straight in the eyes. He kept quiet and

just stared at her for what seemed to PadmÃ© like an eternity. Finally, he said, "I can't say I don't love you, or that I want to be away from you. To do so would be to betray my heart. I'd never be happy without you in my life, you're essential to me more so than the air I breathe." Tears started to form in Anakin's eyes now.

"So stay. You can have everything you want here. You can be a pilot here and come home to me everyday. You're being stubborn!" PadmÃ© yelled out in frustration.

"I have something to confessâ€¦" Anakin said reluctantly. "Another reason I decided to leave was also to see if it would matter to you."

"What?!" PadmÃ© asked incredulously.

"Your people always came first with you. You told me so yourself. And I loved you so much, it kind of hurt when it was clear you didn't love me nearly as much. I guess I was jealous, I'm sorry," Anakin said shyly.

"Anakin, I do love you! More than anything. When I told you my people came first even before you, I said it so that I hoped you wouldn't ask me to choose between you and my duties as queen, because I knew if you ever didâ€¦ I'd choose you." PadmÃ© said as she held Anakin's hands in hers.

With that, Anakin smiled. "You mean that?" Anakin asked in disbelief.

"Yes, and do you think I'd be able to perform my duties efficiently if I ended up being married to anyone else other than you? I'd be so miserable," PadmÃ© said laughing at the disbelief in Anakin's voice.

"You know, being a pilot for Wing Academy has its rewards, but no reward's worth this. Being with you I mean. I love you, PadmÃ©." Anakin said reassured, finally putting his insecurities behind him, and then he went on one knee and asked, "Will you marry me?"

PadmÃ© couldn't help but smile, her first genuine one that day. "Does this mean you've decided to stay?"

"That of course depends on your answer," Anakin said giving PadmÃ© a mischievous grin. And with that, she pulled him up to her and gave him a gravity-defying kiss.

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The End

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I don't think I need to tell you what her answer was now do I? I hope you enjoyed, feedbacks are appreciated J

End

file.